

feet high. The winter tourist can secure only sterile fronds, as it does not fruit till midsummer, while all the others are in fruit in February and March.

Almost as beautiful as the lace fern is *Cheilanthes Fendleri* Hook., which I have found mostly at an altitude of 4,000 to 5,000 feet. It is small, with three to five inch fronds. In like localities is a fern three or four times larger, *Polystichum munitum* (Kaulf.) Underw., and also the very small but neat *Polypodium californicum* Kaulf.

This list is small but covers all likely to be found in winter and early spring, and it will take a good many long tramps to find all of these. Possibly the number might be doubled by exploring the higher mountains in summer, and taking trips through the state to the north, where the rainfall is greater and the conditions for fern growth are more favorable.

GRANVILLE, N.Y.

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## POLYPODIUM VULGARE IN GREAT BRITAIN

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In the very interesting article by Mr. Henry W. Merrill, in the AMERICAN FERN JOURNAL, I find a reference to the<sup>m</sup> above species in connection with our Choice British Ferns,<sup>s</sup> and would like to point out that the greater number of named varieties here cannot fairly be imputed to a tendency to give more names, but is really due to the fact that the much longer period of investigation into fern variation on this side has naturally resulted in the finding of a greater number of distinct forms worthy of distinct names.

The particular point, however, which strikes me, in



the article, and has struck me in others, is that there does not seem to be the same general impulse in the States as prevails here to collect not merely fronds for herbaria, but specimens of the living plants for cultivation and propagation by spores or otherwise. Here, this is always done, and the result is that practically all the named and distinct forms found figure in not one but all collections of note as growing plants. In this way we are able to judge far better of the character than from merely dried and compressed specimens, apart from the fact that the mere collection of fronds for drying, if the material be scanty, is apt to destroy the plants entirely, instead, as might be done by one plant, propagating and perpetuating them.

Some years ago, I read with pain, in the Fern Bulletin, of the discovery of a single rare specimen, which was at once denuded of its fronds for herbarium specimens, while the finder, not content with this, commissioned a friend to visit the locality in the autumn and obtain the second crop, which almost inevitably meant death to the plant. This, to my mind, is absolute vandalism. Several, indeed most of my own discoveries have been solitary plants, and in every case these have been carefully lifted, swathed in damp moss, and taken home intact, the result being eventually the wide distribution of plants raised from spores or offsets, and the consequent perpetuation of new forms. Mr. Merrill mentions several forms of *Polypodium vulgare* which from the descriptions and names I cannot allocate to known forms here. For instance, he speaks of one of his own finds occupying an extended station, with hundreds of "beautifully crisped and ruffled" fronds, and none of the type, obviously a splendid find. He does not, however, collect a plant or plants for growing, but merely a few fronds for drying, the graceful ruffles of which he regrets would be ruined in the press. A few bits of the rhizome put



into his vasculum might eventually have enriched and displayed their beautiful fronds to innumerable fern lovers, instead of failing entirely to demonstrate their charm to anyone but himself, and that only *in situ*. As I am interested in varieties of any of the species which are common to Britain and the United States, I should be most happy to exchange living specimens of good forms, particularly of *P. vulgare*. Packed in a tin box in damp moss, it travels well, and in this way I should be enabled to compare forms similarly named to our own, but probably not identical with them, as wild finds are rarely exact repeats of others. We have, for instance, several very distinct forms of *cambricum*, some far excelling the old one. Incidentally, I may mention that some years ago, a polydactylous *Lastræa thelypteris* was found in the United States by Mrs. Puffer, and a piece of rhizome was very kindly supplied to me. I have now a large pan of it, polydactylous throughout. Fortunately, as soon as it was well established, one small, very fertile frond appeared, the only one it has produced, and seizing the opportunity, I have raised a batch, most of which are replicas of the parent. A few appear to have reverted, but two or three are beautifully and heavily crested with fine bunch tassels and very handsome, though small as yet.

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